

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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S E C R E T QUITO 3987

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: XA, CU, UR, MPOL, EC
SUBJECT: ECUADOR REACTION TO SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 148740

1. CHARGE AND POLCOUNS DISCUSSED GOE ATTITUDE TOWARD CUBAN
AND SOVIET (BUT PRIMARILY THE FORMER) PRESENCE IN AFRICA WITH
HERNAN VIENTIMILLA, FONOFF'S DIRGEN OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS,
ON JUNE 12.

2. VEINTIMILLA DIVIDED HIS RESPONSES INTO JURIDICAL, POLITICAL
AND PERSONAL. LEGALLY, HE SAID, CUBA'S CONTENTION THAT
ITS INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA OWES TO ITS BEING INVITED BY THE
AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS AND IS THEREFORE NOT INTERVENTION MUST
BE GRANTED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF VALIDITY. THE COMPARISON WITH
THE US IN VIETNAM MAY BE PAINFUL, BUT NOT ENTIRELY INAPPROPRIATE.
THE ANGOLA INVOLVEMENT MIGHT BE EXCEPTED FROM THIS ARGUMENT
BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OBTAINING AT THE TIME. ON THE
OTHER HAND OUTSIDE INVOLVEMENT OF ANY TYPE IN AN UNSTABLE
SITUATION MUST BE CONDEMNED BEFORE THE PERTINENT INTERNATIONAL

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ORGANIZATIONS.

3. POLITICALLY, NEITHER ECUADOR NOR ANY OTHER LATIN
AMERICAN COUNTRY IS PLEASED WITH THE CUBAN AND SOVIET
PRESENCE IN AFRICA, HE CONTINUED. IT IS NOT ONLY THE
EAST-WEST ASPECTS WHICH ARE DISTURBING, BUT THE POTENTIAL
FOR APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE OF OPEN INTERVENTION BY CUBA

IN AMERICA AS WELL. FOR INSTANCE, VEINTIMILLA SUPPOSED THAT GUYANA COULD INVITE IN CUBAN TROOPS TO FIGHT VENEZUELA DURING A BORDER DISPUTE OR ENGAGE IN SIMILAR MISCHIEF IN OTHER PLACES.

4. COMMENTING ON THE DANGER OF POLARIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA IF THE US INTENDED TO CONFRONT CUBA AGAIN, VEINTIMILLA ALLOWED THAT THERE WAS SOME POSSIBILITY OF THIS HAPPENING.

THERE REMAINS A LATENT "US" VS. "THEM" SITUATION BETWEEN THE US AND THE OTHERS AND CUBA MIGHT BE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM THIS. MOREOVER, MANY COUNTRIES WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO BE FAVORABLE TO THE US IN SUCH A CONFRONTATION HAVE BEEN ALIENATED BY RECENT US POLICIES AND MIGHT ACTUALLY REVEL IN US DISCOMFITURE OVER THIS QUESTION. NEVERTHELESS, FEW WOULD HAVE QUARREL IF THE US DECIDED TO REIMPOSE SANCTIONS ON CUBA, SINCE THIS WOULD BE UNILATERAL DECISION FULLY RECOGNIZED UNDER RECENT OAS DECISIONS.

5. PERSONALLY, VEINTIMILLA REMARKED THAT THE GOE, FROM THE SUPREME COUNCIL DOWN, WAS VERY ANTI-COMMUNIST AND HELD NO BRIEF FOR CUBAN ACTIVITIES. HE AND MANY OTHER ECUADOREAN CIVIC LEADERS HAD APPLAUDED IN THEIR HEARTS THE IDEALISM BEHIND THE US WILLINGNESS TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN FOREIGN STRUGGLES AGAINST COMMUNISM, EVEN WHILE
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DOUBTING THE WISDOM AND LEGAL JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH ENTERPRISES. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN ECUADOREAN SUPPORT IN ADVANCE FOR ABSTRACT, HYPOTHETICAL, OR NON-EXISTENT POSITIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HINTED THAT ECUADOR MIGHT BE AGAINST WESTERN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN PRINCIPLE, BUT MIGHT SOMEHOW FIND ITS WAY CLEAR TO SUPPORT SUCH A MOVE WHEN IT CAME BASED UPON AN APPRAISAL OF THE CONCRETE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES. ECUADOR, COULD NOT, HOWEVER, GIVE THE US CARTE BLANCHE IN ADVANCE. WHEN THE US COMES UP WITH SPECIFIC PROPOSALS, ECUADOR, HE PROMISED, WOULD DO ITS BEST TO SUPPORT THEM. HE HOPED THAT GOE WOULD BE APPRISED IN TIME OF ANY INITIATIVE IN ORDER TO ASSURE ITS COOPERATION.

6. COMMENT: GOE IS OBVIOUSLY NOT PLEASED WITH SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA, BUT NEITHER IS IT LIKELY TO GET OUT IN FRONT ON THE ISSUE. VEINTIMILLA SEEMED TO BE SAYING THAT THE GOE'S HEART IS WITH US, BUT ITS PUBLIC POSITION MUST BE RESERVED FOR THE TIME BEING.
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